

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the first paragraph, which begins with "This is a division. . ." with the following new paragraph:

This is a ~~division~~ divisional application of U.S. Application ~~application~~ Serial No. 08/951,672, filed October 16, 1997, which issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,305,450 on October 23, 2001, and which is incorporated by reference.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 18, line 5, with the following new paragraph:

The profile 26 of the radially inner surface of this mold is denoted by a solid line in Fig. 7. In the same Fig. 7, ribs designed to form cavities and grooves in the tread pattern are identified as element 27. In particular, a central rib 27a is provided centered on an equatorial plane of the mold, and at least one circumferential groove 11 of the tire tread band corresponds to the central rib 27a. In one embodiment, the central rib 27a includes at least one circumferential depression 30, and the tread stiffening means, which is comprised of the rib 17 in one embodiment, corresponds to the at least one circumferential depression 30. In addition, highlighted by a dotted line is the profile 28 of the mold as modified in accordance with the invention. Chain line 29 indicates the profile of the surface tangent to the rib ridges according to profile 28. The determination of the inner profile for the new mold takes place as follows.

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